



**Michelle at Buffalo and Erie County
Workforce Development Consortium, Inc.**
HPOG Buffalo
Buffalo, NY

An inspiring sister gave Michelle strength to climb the career ladder.



Michelle never thought she would have the opportunity to go to college. She was working in customer service when she began a relationship with a coworker. By the time their third child arrived, Michelle and her boyfriend were struggling to stay afloat.

Michelle stayed home to take care of the children while her boyfriend worked a full-time job. Money was tight, and the pressure caused them to part ways. Her boyfriend took a job in another state, leaving Michelle with no means to support her three children.

Michelle's situation was growing dire. She was working odd jobs and combing the neighborhood for bottles and cans to return. She decided to go to the Erie County Department of Social Services, and became a TANF recipient, receiving cash assistance and food stamps. She stayed in this cycle of poverty for three years until a visit from the father of her children ended in domestic violence. Michelle knew a big change was needed in her life, but she didn't know where to start.

Michelle admired her sister for pursuing a career in healthcare, transitioning from pharmacy technician to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). While researching pharmacy technician starting wages, she found an ad for [HPOG Buffalo](#). She saw how they helped people reach their employment goals through education and training. She applied for the pharmacy technician program at Erie Community College after attending an information session at the Buffalo Employment and Training Center (BETC).

In April 2017, she was accepted to the HPOG Buffalo program. Her HPOG case manager, Paige, became her biggest supporter. "Paige checked on me every week to see how class was going and if I was having any difficulties. She provided an ear for me to vent to when I needed it, and it also linked me with community services when I needed some help. She was a huge support to me." Michelle received childcare assistance, a stipend for transportation, and help from the Self-Sufficiency Fund to pay for vehicle repairs.

HPOG ensured Michelle was well-prepared when it was time to look for a job. Paige helped her craft a resume. The HPOG employment specialist helped her with interview techniques and job leads. She got a full-time job as a pharmacy technician with Union Medical Pharmacy, and has been with them for over a year. She no longer receives assistance and is saving money for a house. Michelle hopes to follow in her sister's footsteps, and continue training to become an LPN.

"HPOG really came through with me when it came time to search for a job."

This success story was self-identified by the grantee and information contained in this document was provided by the grantee.